

2 April 2008

Today my cooperating teacher asked, "is he in line?" referring to a student who wasn't standing in his line spot.

Where does this phrase come from, "to be in line"? A pondering:

"Get in line,"
the teacher squawks to the students in the hall.
"Get in line,"
the usher requests of the patrons in the lobby.
"Get in line,"
the sergeant demands of the recruits in the field.

In geometry you learn
lines come in many forms,
in the theatre you hear
lines come in many sounds,
in battle you see
lines come in many lengths-

yet the teacher-usher-sergeant
upon using their lines
to refer to their lines
prefer all their lines
to be
straight, straight, straight.

Students use your geometry
to curve up that line
to swerve up that line
AND
to swing in the line
to bring in the line

Students use your drama
to serve up that line
to nerve up your line
AND
to sing in the line
to bring in the line

Students use your focus
to verve up that line
to firm up that line
AND
to fling in the line

to bring in the line

And we'll
slide
skip
march
jump
home.

NOTE: I want my students to walk, run, skip, and jump their OWN lines!!! When do students push against constraints? When are constraints too much? I don't want my students to "think outside the box." I want my students to see no boxes! This means challenging what they know, questioning to seek what they don't know, and knowing that what they know will always change.

It doesn't help my students get to higher thinking if their world is modeled in straight lines. Sure, lines exist for many reasons, the bottom line being control. Where does power lie? With whom? When is it appropriate to defy/push against/fight the power and when is it appropriate to follow/flow with/go with it? How does one defy and how does one follow? These are just a few questions I want my students to think about in their daily lives. I want the classroom to serve as grounds for experimentation- defying AND following, with critical debate, written responses, and scenario enactment.

OVERHEARD IN THE CLASSROOM:

Teacher: (referring to open space in the carpet where students were asked to sit): "You can fill in if you want."

10-year-old student: "I want to fill out."

To this student, there are no boxes!!!